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ABSTRACT

The 30 listening and speaking activities in this collection are designed to motivate students to use foreign languages for communicating their ideas and to encourage students to be creative. The criteria for including the activities were: (1) proven effectiveness toward improving students' oral language proficiency; (2) ease of adaptability to any foreign language; (3) usefulness in high school, college, and university classes; and (4) originality. Each activity is grouped under one of three subheadings (tete-a-tete conversations, small group interactions, whole class activities) and contains the following components: (1) suggested levels of language proficiency; (2) a statement of purpose; (3) a description of materials for student participation; (4) step-by-step procedures; and (5) the originator of the idea. (EKN)

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# LISTENING AND SPEAKING ACTIVITIES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNERS: SECOND COLLECTION

## Introduction

Foreign language teachers today want their students to learn another language well enough to be understood by native speakers. As experienced teachers and students know, achieving that goal demands a great deal of dedication and time. So often, however, precious time and effort are wasted when students manipulate monotonous exercises that require little thought and rarely challenge the imagination. Although such exercises are sometimes labeled as "communicative," they result in predictable outcomes: student boredom, frustration, attrition, and very limited progress toward mastery of the foreign language.

Fortunately, some language textbooks are beginning to include activities that appeal to the interests, creativity, and intelligence of students. For example, these new texts contain realistic role plays, challenging language games, guided interviews, small group discussions, and other actvitities tnat motivate students to speak and understand a foreign language. Unfortunately, there are still not enough of such commercial materials available. Many teachers therefore have developed their own communication activities. Too often, however, language teahcers lack experience in writing such materials, or they simply do not have the time to do so.

One sensible way to compensate for the lack of adequate oral communication activities in modern language textbooks is to share ideas with other teachers. Indeed, this practice may be the primary reason that idea exchanges at foreign language conferences

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are so well attended. Teachers are eager to learn new techniques to make language learning an exciting and rewarding experience for their students.

This paper is a response to this healthy trend in language education. It includes this writer's second collection of classroom-tested activities for motivating students to practice listening comprehension and speaking skills in any foreign language.[1] Most of the thirty activities in the collection were written by other teachers; several activities appeared in recent professional publications. The criteria for including the activities were: proven effectiveness toward improving students' oral language proficiency, ease of adaptability to any foreign language, usefulness in high school, college and university classes, and originality. I rewrote the activities to fit a single format, and included several of my own variations, follow-up activities and examples to those already suggested by the authors. Teachers will want to adopt and modify the activities according to their own teaching style and to their students' interests and communicative needs. Each activity is grouped under one of three subheadings (Tête-à-Tête Conversations, Small Group Interactions, Whole Class Activities), and contain the following components: suggested level(s) of language proficiency (beginning, intermediate, advanced), a statement or purpose, a description of materials for student participants, step-by-step procedures, and the name of its author. The Index provides a useful cross-reference to the communication activities by proficiency level and activity number.

## TÊTE-À-TÊTE CONVERSATIONS

1. WHY?

Level: Beginning, Intermediate.

Purpose: To ask and answer "Why" questions.

Materials: None.

Procedure: Student A makes a statement in the foreign language. Student B must ask "Why ...." (repeating the statement). Student A must give a reason. Student B again asks "Why ..." (repeating the reason). Student A states a reason. Student B asks "Why ..." (repeating the reason). Then the partners change roles and begin again.

Example:

Student A: "Le soleil est jaune." (The sun is yellow.)

Student B: "Pourquoi est-ce que le soleil est jaune." (Why is the sun yellow?)

Student A: "Parce-ce qu'il fait beau." (Because it's nice out.)

Student B: "Pourquoi est-ce qu'il fait beau?" (Why is it nice out?)

Student A: "Parce-que c'est le printemps." (Because it's spring.)

Source: Nancy Barrick, Zion-Benton High School, Zion, Illinois.

## 2. GRAMMAR PING PONG

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To ask and answer questions in various tenses.

Materials: Sets of 20-25 index cards. The teacher writes the infinitive form of a verb in the center of each card, and writes a specific subject pronoun and verb tense in the lower left-hand corner.

Procedure: Partners sit opposite each other, shuffle their set of index cards, then place the deck face down in front of them. Student A draws the top card, says aloud the correct form of the verb in the indicated person and tense, then asks Student B a question using that verb, person and tense. Student B answers the question, draws the next index card, says the correct verb form, and asks Student A a question using that verb.

Follow-up activity: Give each student a set of verb cards. Ask the students to write a brief story using all the verbs on the cards in any order.

Source: Walter Josef Denk, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan

3. ROUND ROBIN INTERVIEWS

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To interview one's classmates on various topics.

Materials: Small (4 x 5") booklets containing dittoed or xeroxed pages of incomplete statements or questions. Each page can represent a different topic such as school life, educational background, hobbies, family, etc. The statements/questions contain vocabulary and grammar that are appropriate to the level of the class. For example, for intermediate ESL students, one page on the topic of Family Life might begin as follows: "A favorite place that my family and I visit is. . ." "We like that place because. . ." "Another reason we go there often is . . ."

Procedure: Students are asked to pair off with someone they do not know well. Students in each pair respond to the statement or questions on the first page of the booklet. After both students write each other's response in the booklet, they find a new partner, turn to the second page, and respond to one another's statement or question. This procedure is repeated by all students until they have completed all the pages in their booklets.

Follow-up activities:

1. Ask students to share with the entire class what they have learned about individual classmates according to

the information they wrote in their booklets.

2. Ask students to form small groups and share the information in their booklets.

Source: Mary Eddy Elichirigoity, Principia college, Elsah, Illinois

4. GUIDED CONVERSATIONS

Level: Beginning, Intermediate

Purpose: To carry on short conversations with cues from incomplete dialogs.

Materials: A set of incomplete dialogs for each student. Some guidelines for writing incomplete dialogs are as follows: 1) The dialogs should relate to everyday situations. 2) Include only the vocabulary and grammatical structures that the students are familiar with. 3) Unless the students are all females or males, write the roles for Student A and Student B so either a male or female can play them. 4) Do not include questions that could embarrass students, such as "Are you fat?" or "Do you take drugs?". 5) Try to include good humor, whenever possible.

Example: (For beginning students)

You and your partner are just getting acquainted.

A: Buenos días. Me llamo_____.

B: Mucho gusto,_____. Me llamo_____.

A: Mucho gusto. (Shake hands) ¿De dónde es usted?

B: Soy_____.

A: ¡Ay! Es divino por allá, ¿no?

B: _____.

A: ¡_____!

Procedures: Distribute a copy of the dialogs to each student. The students form pairs and complete the dialogs orally. Afterwards,

they switch roles and begin again. Note: The partners should not be permitted to write their dialog lines during this activity.

Follow-up activity: Ask the students to complete the dialogs in writing as a homework assignment which they turn in for correction.

Source: James M. Hendrickson, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan

5. WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To express one's opinion about and intensity of feeling toward a controversial issue.

Materials: Make a list of statements relating to a controversial issue. Type each statement with a Likert scale as shown in the example below. Copy one opinion survey for each student in class.

Example (on the topic of Human Cloning)

1. Fifty years from now, there will be communities of human clones on Earth.

very possible | possible | not sure | almost impossible | impossible

2. Cloning will destroy the human family as we know it today.

very possible | possible | not sure | almost impossible | impossible

3. Etc.

Procedures: Distribute one opinion survey to each student. Ask the students to complete it by marking an X on each scale to express their opinion about the statement. Then the students pair off and discuss in the foreign language how and why they marked their Likert scales as they did.

Variation: This activity also works well in small groups of 4 or 5 persons. Caution: Inhibited students often express their opinions more openly if paired with another student rather than being a member of a small group.

Source: James M. Hendrickson, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan.

6. PICTURE DIFFERENCES

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To describe comparisons and contrasts.

Materials: A set of two drawings that are identical except for 5-10 minor differences. Teachers who do not have the time or the talent to draw pictures can xerox two copies of a simple magazine illustration. Then, on one of the copies certain items can be omitted using typewriter correction fluid, and slight differences can be added using a black ink pen. Copy one set of these "master" drawings for each pair of students in the class.

Procedure: Student A receives one of the pictures in the set, and Student B receives the other picture. The directions to each student-pair are as follows: "You and your partner have pictures that are similar but not exactly alike. Describe your picture to each other in the foreign language. Your task is to discover x number of differences between the picture. Do not look at each other's picture!".

Variations:

1. Use drawings that test specific lexical or phonological problems. For example, students of Spanish could compare the words librería and biblioteca, and Oriental students of ESL could contrast the pronunciations of lake and rake.

2. If the teacher has access to a language laboratory, it is possible to connect two students together so that they can converse with each other as if they were speaking on a telephone. A simple patch cord between the two inputs in the control console allows the two students to participate in this activity without interfering with others in the lab. Also, the teacher can listen in, or even record the conversation so that the students can enjoy listening to themselves later.

Source: Richard Yorkey, St. Michael's College, Winooski, Vermont.

## 7. COLLAGE FOR COMMUNICATION

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To tell a story based on a collage.

Materials: Old magazines, scissors, paste, a large lightweight sheet of tagboard or similar material for each student pair.

Procedure: First, each pair of students agrees upon an abstract theme for a collage; e.g., Happiness, Beauty, Love, Life, etc.. The partners collect magazine pictures that depict the message of their theme. Next, the students look for or write out nouns, verbs, adjectives, and phrases related to their theme; e.g., "miracle," "gift," "wonderful," "enjoy," "take good care," for the theme of Life. Then the partners lay out and paste up their collage. Afterwards, they write a short script as a narrative or dialog based on their collage. The teacher should proofread the scripts for errors and for ease of comprehension by the entire class. Finally, the pairs of students present their collage and read their scripts in front of the class.

Additional suggestions:

1. Tape record or videotape the presentations for self-criticism later and for determining the best project.
2. Invite other classes to see the presentations, to ask the student pairs any questions about their themes, and to vote for the best presentation.

Source: Theresa McQueeny, The Newport College-Salve Regina, Newport, Rhode Island.

8. OPEN-ENDED SCENARIO

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To engage students in creative conversation by means of several stages of a theme or set of themes.

Materials: A handout that describes a specific scenario, the student's task, and guidelines for carrying out the task (see the example below).

Procedure: Each pair of students is given guidelines for participating in a specific scenario. The students are instructed to complete a given task based on the scenario. They carry out this task in the foreign language.

Example of a data-based scenario (for intermediate level students):
Stage 1: The teacher tells the partners that they are good friends and have been placed on a diet by their physician. Each partner has been told to lose 10 lbs. They meet to compare their weights which are recorded weekly. The figures for the first three weeks are as follows:

| | Week 1 | Week 2 | Week 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student A: | 188 | 187 | 188 |
| Student B: | 185 | 180 | 177 |

The partners talk about the results of three weeks of dieting.
Stage 2: The partners are given another set of statistics that show their weights recorded on the following three weeks:

| | Week 4 | Week 5 | Week 6 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Student A: | 184 | 182 | 179 |
| Student B: | 177 | 178 | 178 |

The partners continue their conversation.

Additional Suggestions:

1. Select two students who are fairly proficient in the foreign language. With the teacher's assistance, ask the pair to rehearse their discussion outside of class, then to present their discussion before the class. Thus, the two partners receive extra pronunciation and guided conversation practice, and their classmates receive additional practice in listening comprehension.
2. Videotape the scenarios for student self-critiques and to provide demonstrations on the open-ended scenario techniques for next year's students.

Source: Robert Di Pietro, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware.

## 9. SCAVENGER HUNT

Level: Beginning, Intermediate

Purpose: To practice using specific vocabulary and to encourage group participation.

Materials: Copies of a list of about fifteen different items that can be found in the school environment.

Sample List:

1. a crumpled white paper
2. an old shoe lace
3. an umbrella
4. a postage stamp
5. a picture of a baby
6. a small mirror
7. a map
8. a coin
9. something made from leather
10. a clean paper towel
11. a hairbrush
12. one tennis shoe
13. a bottle of glue
14. a scissors
15. a book with a blue cover

Procedure: Explain to the class the meaning of any new vocabulary item on the list. Then explain the following procedure before beginning the scavenger hunt: The students form teams of 5 or 6 persons. Give one copy of the scavenger list to each team. Allow a specific amount of time for the team to collect the items on the list; they may use only the foreign language as they do so. (The team can be penalized by subtracting one point every time one of its members uses the native language while participating in this activity.) The team that collects the most items on the list wins the game.

Source: Diane Phort and Brenda Winch, International Institute, Flint, Michigan

10. STORY HOUR

Level: Advanced.

Purpose: To create a story spontaneously in the past tense.

Materials: Sets of 25-30 index cards on each of which is written one verb in its infintive form.

Procedure: Students form groups of 4-6 members and sit in a circle. The verb deck is shuffled and is placed face down in the middle of the circle. One student draws the top card and uses the verb on the card in the past tense (e.g., preterite and imperfect in Spanish, narrative past in German, passé composé and imparfait in French, etc.). This sentence becomes the first line of the story. The second student draws the next card and continues the story, using the verb on the card. The activity proceeds in this manner until all students have had an opportunity to contribute to the story which ends either logically or when all the verb cards have been used.

Follow-up activity: Give each student a set of verb cards. Ask the students to write a story in the past tense using all the verbs on the cards in any order.

Source: Walter Josef Denk, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan.

## 11. GROUP INTERVIEW

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To practice conversational skills in a group interview format.

Materials: Prepare and distribute to the class a list of 10-25 interview questions. The questions can be based on either a general or a specific topic, but they should be written so that all students are able to easily understand them.

Procedure: Ask the students to form groups of three or four. One student in each group will be on focus for 1-3 minutes (less time for beginning students, more time for higher proficiency students). The other two or three group members take turns asking the focus person questions either from this list or asking follow-up questions. The focus person may pass on any question that he or she can not answer or does not wish to answer. Each student in the group is given an opportunity to be on focus. Signal when students should take their turn to be interviewed.

Follow-up activity: After each student has been interviewed by his or her peers, discuss with the students how they felt about being interviewed in a group. Also, discuss how and why communication broke down occasionally, and what was done to solve the problems. These discussions can be done either in the students' native language or the foreign language, depending on the level of proficiency of the class.

Source: Mary Ann Christisen (Snow College, Ephriam, Utah) and Sharron Kay Bassano (Santa Cruz Adult School, Santa Cruz, California).

12. SHADOW ACTING

Level: Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To role play the action in a cartoon strip.

Materials: Cartoon strips that have 3 or 4 panels per strip.

Procedure: After choosing one or more cartoon strips, the teacher or students ink out the figures in each panel; the result will be "shadow figures". Give one cartoon strip to each class member. Divide the class into groups of 3 or 4 students, depending on the number of different figures in the strip. Students in each small group decide on what is happening in their strip. Then each person pretends to be one of the shadow figures. Each group writes a brief conversation for its strip within a given time-frame (e.g., ten minutes), then acts out the cartoon strip.

Source: Mary Ann Christisen (Snow College, Ephraim, Utah) and Sharron Kay Bassano (Santa Cruz Adult School, Santa Cruz, California)

## 13. COMMUNICATION STRIPS

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To cooperate within a group in order to achieve a group consensus.

Materials: The teacher writes several short stories about life-coping situations. The stories should contain the vocabulary and sentence patterns common to the spoken foreign language, and they should be written according to the students' proficiency level. The stories should also include sequence clues such as "afterwards," "then," "when she said that," etc. Each story should consist of 6-10 sentences of no more than 15 words per sentence. Type each sentence on a separate line, then cut the lines into individual strips of paper.

Procedure: Explain to the class that each student in the group will receive a strip of paper that contains one sentence from a story. Their task is to put the story into a logical sequence by orally reassembling the strips. The students may not show their strips to any other student. The students group themselves in circles of 6-10 persons, depending on the number of sentences in the story. Give each student one sentence strip. They read over their strips, look up unfamiliar words, and receive any necessary help on pronunciation from the teacher. Then they begin to piece together the story, using only the foreign language.

Variation: With beginning or very inhibited students, the teacher may wish to follow another procedure. First, the teacher writes potentially unfamiliar vocabulary words on the board and elicts their meaning from the class. Second, the teacher sets the scene of the story orally or by using pictures, and introduces the characters. (Caution: This step should be very brief.) Third, the teacher reads each sentence strip at random as a dictation. After the dictation has been corrected and put away, the students put together the story orally.

Follow-up activities:

1. Students can role play the story with the other students, prompting the "actors" from individual strips.
2. Each student can dictate his or her strip, in story order, to the rest of the class until the whole story has been told.
3. One student can change the story into reported speech and retell the story to the class.

Source: Many Ann Boyd and John R. Boyd, Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois.
(The authors state that this activity evolved from Robert E. Gibson's article on strip stories that appeared in the June 1975 issue of the TESOL QUARTERLY.)

## 14. SHUFFLED COMICS

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To practice recognizing visual and grammatical sequence signals and to reinforce oral communication and aural comprehension.

Materials: A comic strip that contains 6-10 panels, each having one balloon with words. If no suitable comic strip can be found in the foreign language, simply block out the words with typing correction fluid, then write in the translation of the words. Cut out each panel of the comic strip, paste it on a 3 x 5 inch card, and shuffle the panels.

Procedure: Explain to the class that each student will receive a panel from a comic strip. Their task is to orally reassemble the comic strip into a logical sequence. They may not show their panels to any member of their group. The students group themselves in circles of 6-10 persons, depending on the number of panels in the comic strip.

Each student receives one panel and is asked to tell what the panel's characters are doing and saying. The group members begin to reassemble the pictures into their original order.

Follow-up activity: The students can role play the situation and characters in the comic strip for additional oral practice.

Source: Richard Yorkey, St. Michael's College, Winooski, Vermont.

15. ORAL READING

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To retell a short story.

Materials: A very short, interesting story told in short sentences, stick figures depiciting the story's characters, a magnetic chalkboard and magnets or a feltboard to which the stick figures can adhere.

Procedure: The teacher reads aloud the story slowly while placing the appropriate stick figures to help convey meaning. The teacher reads the story again and points to the appropriate figures. The students repeat each line of the story several times. Then the teacher points to each figures as the students retell the story. (Caution: As long as the students' sentences are intelligible, do not correct their errors in pronunciation, vocabulary, or grammar at this point.) Ask for several volunteers to retell the story once again. Then the class divides into small groups to rehearse the story and to perform it in their own words.

Follow-up activity: After the role play, the students can retell the story in writing, then hand in their stories to be corrected by the teacher.

Source: Perry Anastos, retired from Babylon Junior/Senior High School, Long Island, New York.

16. YOU'RE ON THE AIR!

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To create a radio commercial.

Materials: A tape recorder and a blank tape.

Procedures: After forming groups of 3 or 4 persons, the students elect an advertising director, announcer, and sound effects person. Under the leadership of the director, the group decides upon a real or fictitious product, event or place that it wishes to advertise in a radio commercial. The students can find advertising ideas in newspapers, magazines, and on the radio and television. Once they have decided upon a specific product, they write a 60-second radio commercial that has persuasive language, sound effects, and a song or jingle to attract potential clients. During this time, the teacher circulates among the groups to provide information, advice and encouragement. After the script has been written, the group members proofread it for spelling, punctuation, grammar and vocabulary usage, persuasiveness, and appropriate places for the sound effects, song or jingle. The teacher also proofreads it for these elements. The students rehearse the script, use a wristwatch or clock to time it, and they make any necessary revisions. The announcer and the sound effects person record the script under the guidance of the director. When all the radio commericals have been recorded, they are played back to the class for listening comprehension practice and for pure enjoyment. The class can vote for the best commercial, if so desired.

Suggestions:

1. Each group writes 5-10 true-false, fill-in-the-blank, or multiple-choice questions relating to the content of its radio commerical. These questions are copied and distributed to all students who respond to them as they listen to the playbacks of the radio advertisements.

2. Save a copy of the recorded tapes and listening comprehension questions (if any). Current and future language students can listen to the tapes in class and during their free time. If the tapes are accompanied by questions, type their answers on another sheet. These packaged materials could serve as modules and form part of the listening component of an individualized or self-paced foreign language program.

Source: James M. Hendrickson, Lansing Community College, Lansing, Michigan

## 17. "HOLLYWOOD" PRODUCTIONS

Level: Advanced

Purpose: To create and film a skit based on a specific theme.

Materials: A camera and tape recorder or a video/recorder, necessary props for the skit.

Procedure: The students form groups of about six persons, and choose a group leader who acts as the skit director. The team chooses a theme for the production such as a wedding, a re-creation of a well-known commercial, a boxing match, etc. The leader assigns roles to individual students, and appoints a prop person. Under the direction of the skit director, the team of "actors" write their lines which the teacher corrects. The students practice their roles, bring the necessary props, and present the skit. The skit is either videotaped or photographed with a slide camera and is tape recorded.

Suggestions: The videotapes/slide tape projects can be used as a device for critiques of pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar usage, or acting ability. The projects can also be saved and shown to future classes of language students.

Follow-up activities:

1: The class can evaluate the skits based on the areas listed under "Suggestions".

2: The skits can be presented during foreign language week or

at an all-school assembly to demonstrate the students' enthusiasm for language learning and to serve as a live "commerical" for attracting new language students.

Source: Diane Deep, Wilmington Area High School, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania

## WHOLE CLASS ACTIVITIES

### 18. BLOCK DRILLS

Level: Beginning, Intermediate.

Purpose: To review vocabulary and telling time.

Materials: A matrix of 12 or 16 blocks--each containing one illustration, a set of questions to accompany the illustrations.

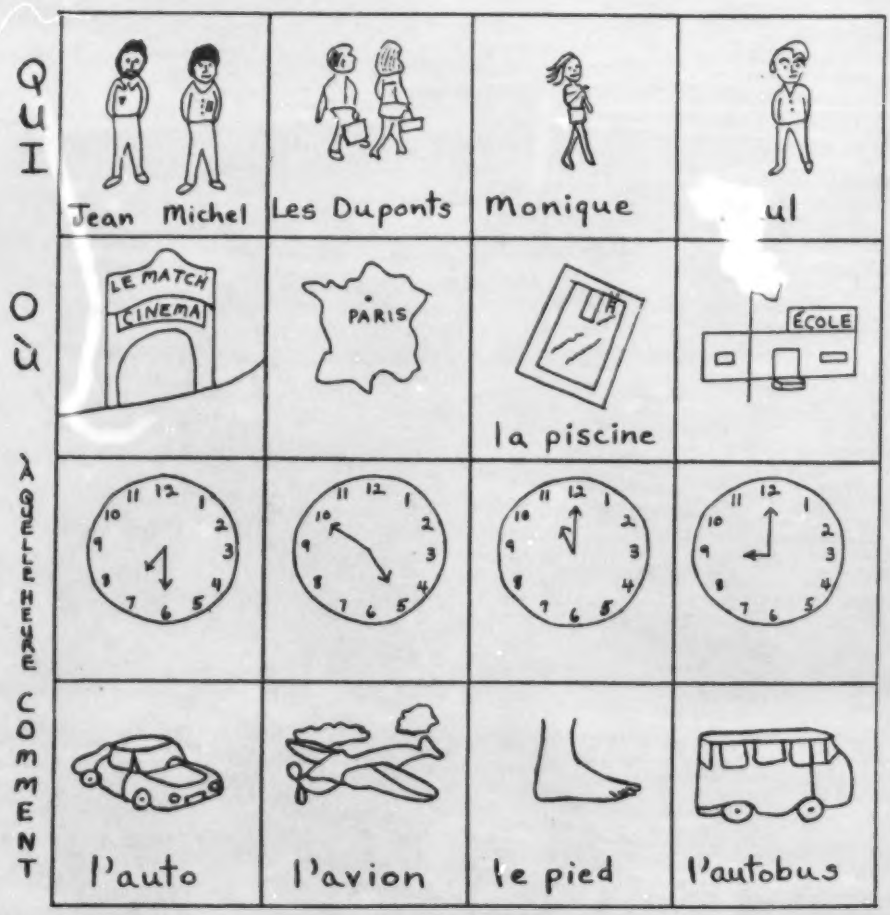
Sample 16-block matrix:

4 blocks with illustrations of people

4 blocks with illustrations of their destinations

4 blocks with illustrations of specific times

4 blocks with illustrations of a mode of transportation



Sample questions to accompany the illustrations:

1. Qui va à Paris? (Who is going to Paris?)
2. Comment vont-ils à Paris? (How are they going to Paris?)
3. À quelle heure vont-ils à Paris? (What time are they going to Paris?)
4. Où va Monique? (Where is Monique going?)
5. À quelle heure va-t-elle à la piscine? (What time is she going to the swimming pool?)
6. Comment va-t-elle à la piscine? (How is she going to the pool?)
7. Où vont Jean et Michel? (Where are Jean and Michel going?)
8. À quelle heure vont-ils au cinéma? (What time are they going to the movies?)
9. Comment vont-ils au cinéma? (How are they going to the movies?)
10. Qui va à l'école? (Who is going to school?)
11. À quelle heure va-t-il à l'école? (What time is he going to school?)
12. Comment va-t-il à l'école? (How is he going to school?)

Procedure: Give each student in the class a copy of the block matrix. Then read aloud the questions that correspond to the matrix. The students must find the correct answers in the blocks, raise their hand, and are called on to say the answer.

Variation: This activity also can be used to practice or test listening comprehension only. Students are asked to write the number of the question in the block that contains the answer to that question.

Source: Virginia M. Branton, Quincy, Massachusetts

19. WHAT AM I?

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To review nouns from a particular lesson or based on a specific topic or theme.

Materials: The teacher prepares about thirty 3 x 5" cards on which a different noun is written in block letters. The nouns can be taken from a particular lesson or can be based on a specific topic or theme.

Procedure: The teacher asks for a volunteer or chooses a student who sits in front of the class with his or her back facing it. Show the class one of the 3 x 5" cards with the noun written on it, then pin the card on the student's back. The students pretends to become that person, place, thing or concept (e.g. Don Quijote or un general, Sicilia, un stylo, die Landschaft). Of course, the student does not know what he or she must pretend to be, but the class does. The student must ask the class about his or her identity. Each student is allowed to ask only one question from each classmate. After five questions have been asked, the student may ask one of the class members for a hint.

Source: Mary Ann Christisen (Snow College, Ephraim, Utah) and Sharron Kay Bassano (Santa Cruz Adult School, Santa Cruz , California)

20. TEACH ORIGAMI

Level: Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To teach origami (Japanese paper folding)

Materials: An elementary book on origami such as Origami: Japanese Paper Folding, Book 1, By Florence Sakade, Charles E. Tuttle Company, squares of colored origami paper.

Procedure: The teacher should read an elementary origami book to learn how to make simple origami figures such as a fan, flower, cup, and boat. Then the teacher explains and demonstrates to the class in the foreign language how to make a particular figure. For example, "First, you fold the paper in half. Fold it over once again like this. Then turn it over . . .", etc. Next give each student a square of origami paper, and tell the students step-by-step how to create the figure using commands in the foreign language.

Follow-up activity: If several students become especially adept and interested in making origami figures, divide the class into small groups, and ask each origami "expert" to lead an origami group session.

Source: Rhonda Tarr, Sunderland, Massachusetts

## 21. MAN-ON-THE-STREET INTERVIEW

Levels: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To express one's spontaneous opinion about a current issue or a popular controversy.

Materials: A cassette or reel-to-reel tape recorder with a hand-held microphone and a blank tape.

Procedure: The teacher pretends to be a reporter downtown. He or she walks around the class asking students to give their opinions on current issues or popular controversies. Some sample questions: "What can people do to make our world a safer place to live in?", "What do you think of the new programs on television?", "Should teachers receive higher salaries?", "What is your opinion of legal abortions paid for with taxpayer's money?".

Source: Sister Adele, Windsor, Ontario (Canada).

## 22. TOPIC BINGO

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To review vocabulary based on a specific topic or theme.

Materials: The teacher selects a group of words that are based on a particular topic such as a holiday, the movies, and sports. Write the words in a Word List, and draw a "Bravo" matrix like the one below.

Sample Word List and "Bravo" Matrix (on Christmas)

WORD LIST

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| un cadeau | la neige | les lumières | une saison |
| gai | décembre | Père Noël | un arbre de Noël |
| les boules | une chanson | un santon | l'hiver |
| les anges | Petit Jésus | le houx | les étrennes |

"BRAVO" MATRIX

| B | R | A | V | O |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| les anges | Père Noël | l'hiver | les boules | Petit Jésus |
| les lumières | gai | la neige | le houx | un cadeau |

Procedure: Give each student a copy of the Word List with a blank BRAVO matrix. Ask the students to write a different word from the list in each guide in the matrix. As the teacher reads aloud a sentence that defines or otherwise refers to each work, students cross out their words accordingly. The first student to cross out all of his or her words shouts "Bravo, I won!" in the foreign language.

Source: James E. Becker, Malcom Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls, Iowa

## 23. USE YOUR IMAGINATION

Level: Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To suggest possible uses of common objects.

Materials: A list of problems in the foreign language such as "Name several things you could do with . . . 1) an old pop bottle, 2) an eraser, 3) some BBs 4) a geometry book".

Procedure: The teacher gives the list of problems to every student in the class. The students express their solutions to the problems in the foreign language. The students should be reassured that there are no right or wrong answers--just possibilities. For example, some possibilities for Problem No. 1 above (an old pop bottle) might include: make a fire bomb, put a long-stemmed rose in it, store oil in it, use it for a club, break it and use it for a knife, paint it for a decoration. The students will need the teacher's assistance with certain vocabulary words which can be written on the chalkboard.

Follow-up activity: Review the meaning and pronunication of the new words written on the chalkboard.

Source: James E. Becker, Malcom Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls, Iowa

## 24. TELL US A STORY

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To retell a short story.

Materials: A vocabulary list of unusual words germane to a particular story.

Procedure: The teacher selects a short story that everyone in the class has read (it may even be a popular story in the students' native language). Two or three days before the discussion give the students the vocabulary list and ask them to study it. Tell the story to the class in the foreign language using the words on the vocabulary list. Then, each student must either ask a question about the story or make a comment about it.

Variation: Advanced students could select a short story, prepare the vocabulary list, tell the story, and elicit questions and comments from the class.

Follow-up activity: Divide the class into small groups. Each group retells the story to the class. Then, one person from each of the other groups must make a comment about the presentation (not the story).

Source: John J. Martin, Carlinville, Illinois.

25. CHOOSING SIDES

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Propose: To learn about the personal values of one's classmate.

Materials: A list of about 10 polar-opposite questions in the foreign language. For example: "Are you a spender or a saver?", "Are you a participant or a spectator?", "Are you a sunrise or a sunset?". The teacher can write the questions or ask students to do so, then hand them in for correction.

Procedure: The teacher begins by asking the students the first question on the list; for example, "Are you a spender or a saver?". The "spenders" are asked to stand on one side of the room, and the "savers" stand on the other side. Ask a saver in the foreign language: "Tell me about saving. Why do you save?". After a few responses from the "saver's" side, ask some students on the other side: "Tell me about spending. What is so wonderful about spending?". After several spenders have defended their position, ask the second questions on the list, and begin again. Continue this procedure until all the questions have been asked, answered, and defended.

Follow-up activity: Ask the students to write down some of the things that they learned about themselves and others while participating in this activity.

Source: Mary Ann Christisen (Snow College, Ephraim, Utah) and Sharron Kay Bassano (Santa Cruz Adult School, Santa Cruz, California)

26. OH, IF I WERE . . .

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To role play an object or a person.

Materials: A list of objects or persons that can be role played such as a used postage stamp, a burned-out light bulb, a well-traveled passport, a well-known television personality (e.g., Miss Piggy) or world leader (e.g., the Pope), a list of adjectives to describe each object or person on the role play list, any necessary props.

Procedure: Give the students a copy of the role-play list and ask them to choose one object or person to role play in the foreign language. After the students make their decisions, give them the adjective list that corresponds to their particular role play. Each student makes a 1-3 minute presentation in which they perform their role play with the use of any props that they wish to bring and use. At the end of the oral presentation, the other members of the class try to guess what their classmate had role played. If necessary, they may ask questions in the foreign language.

Variations:

1. The students could give a short introduction to determine whether or not their classmates could guess their identity.
2. The students could act out their object or person as they describe themselves.

3. The students could use only single adjectives to describe themselves.

Source: James E. Becker, Malcom Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

27. AMBASSADOR

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To play the role of an ambassador at a press conference

Materials: Books, pamphlets, brochures, and maps that contain information about the countries represented by the foreign language studied in class.

Procedure: Each student researches and organizes some general information about a country's history, geography, politics, social life, economics, and industry. The teacher should assist the students in limiting the scope of the research. After completing this phase, each student plays the role of a newly appointed ambassador of the country he or she researched. The ambassador holds an initial press conference attended by reporters from around the world. The other students in the class play the role of reporters who ask the "ambassador" about his or her "country". The reporters, of course, will have prepared their questions before the role play begins. Sample questions: "What is the capital of your country?", "How many people live in your country?", "What's the climate like there?", "What do the people do for work and to have fun?", "What kind of government do you have?"

Follow-up activities:

1. The role plays can be either videotaped or tape recorded for evaluation purposes.
2. Each "ambassador" can turn in a written report on the information collected in the research phase.

Source: Kathleen Hennessey, Rock Valley College, Rockford, Illinois

28. FAMOUS PEOPLE

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To role play a famous person.

Materials: A list of famous historical figures who represent the country or countries where the foreign language is spoken, props necessary for the role play.

Procedure: Students are given a list of names of famous people, and are asked to research some facts about one of them. After several days of preparation, each student portrays an historical figure. The student brings and uses props such as a pitchfork to symbolize a French revolutionary, a crown to represent a Spanish king, or a huge grey wig to portray Marie Antoinette. The student speaks to the class in the first person singular. (Note: The teacher should demonstrate one or two role plays of different historical figures to show students what is expected of them.) During the role play, the students can ask their classmates simple questions in the foreign language such as: "Marie Antoinette, why did they cut off your head?".

Source: James E. Becker, Malcom Price Laboratory School, Cedar Falls, Iowa

29. CONVERSATION CIRCLE

Level: Beginning, Intermediate, Advanced

Purpose: To create meaningful, oral statements and to respond logically to oral questions.

Materials: None

Procedure: The class sits in a circle. The teacher explains the two ground rules for this activity: 1) When the students are sitting in the circle, they must speak only in the foreign language; 2) If students absolutely must use their native language, they must do so by standing outside the circle.
The Conversation Circle progresses through the following sequence of activities:

1. Each student makes a statement about himself or herself beginning with "I".
2. Each student makes a statement about the person sitting on his or her right.
3. Each student asks a question to the person sitting on his or her left. The classmate must respond with a logical answer.
4. The teacher reads a line from a dialog and asks a student to provide a possible follow-up sentence.
5. Each student is told two words with which he or she must use in a sentence.
6. Each student says a word, phrase, or sentence that comes to mind on the spur of the moment.

7. The teacher places a chair, labeled "HOT SEAT" in the center of the circle. The student who sits in the chair must respond to a question asked by the teacher or a classmate. The student must respond logically. (A variation: Two chairs are placed in the middle of the circle. The students sitting in them are told two words, phrases or sentences, and are asked to use them in a logical, four- or six-line dialog.)

Source: Richard Jones, Fallston High School, Fallston, Maryland.

## 30. STUDENT-PREPARED RECORDINGS

Level: Intermediate, Advanced.

Purpose: To create a tape recording based on an interesting reading passage.

Materials: A tape recorder with a microphone, blank tapes, ditto masters or access to a xerox copier, foreign language textbooks, readers, or newspapers.

Procedure: Each student in the class selects an interesting article or story, then summarizes it and writes questions based on its main points. After the teacher corrects the summary and questions, the students write or type the questions on a ditto master sheet which is copied. Then the students tape record their summary, preferably outside of class. The teacher distributes the question sheet to one student to the class and plays his or her tape recording. The class listens to the tape and answers the questions. The creator of the project can provide the correct answers.

Variation: This activity can also be used as a small group project. The group works as a team to select the reading, summarizes it, writes the questions, and records the reading.

Suggestion: Put each tape recording and worksheet into a large envelope, and build a listening comprehension library.

Follow-up activity: The class can evaluate the projects based on clarity of presentation, pronunciation, choice of reading, etc.

Source: Diane Deep, Wilmington Area High School, New Wilmington, Pennsylvania

## Conclusion

The activities suggested here represent a supermarket of ideas that have two common goals: 1) to motivate students to use foreign languages for communicating their ideas, feelings and beliefs, and 2) to encourage students to be creative. The teacher is responsible for selecting the activities that are conducive to the interests and language proficiencies of his or her students.[2] Many of the activities are adaptations of others, and teachers will want to adopt some and adapt others according to their personal teaching style. The activities represent, then, recipes for achieving effective communication in the foreign language classroom--recipes that teachers may try or modify, depending on their taste. Bon apétit![3]

## INDEX

Activities for Beginning Level: 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 9, 11, 13, 14, 18 22, 27, 29.

Activities for Intermediate Level: All but Activities #10 and 17.

Activities for Advanced Level? 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19-30.

FOOTNOTES

[1]The first collection, "Listening and Speaking Activities for Foreign Language Learners," appeared in The Canadian Modern Language Review Volume 36, No. 4 (May 1980): 735-748. The collection is also available on ERIC microfiche as ED 185 812. The Board of Directors of the Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages awarded the collection the Stephen A. Freeman Award for the best article on teaching techniques to have appeared in a professional journal in 1980. I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the thousands of teachers who have responded so favorably to this collection. Their enthusiastic response was the primary motivating force that induced this second collection.

[2]Other writers have also gathered excellent collections of oral communication activities. See, for example, Gerard L. Ervin, "Using Warm-Ups, Wind-Ups, and Fillers: All of Your Class Time is Valuable!", Foreign Language Annals, 15 (1982): 95-99; and Alice Omaggio, "Games and Simulations in the Foreign Language Classroom" (available on ERIC microfiche as ED 177 887).

[3]Do you have a favorite oral communication activity that you would like to share? Write it in the format used in this collection (i.e., title, level, purpose, etc.) and send it to the author, c/o Department of Communication, Lansing Community College, Lansing, MI 48901. If your idea is used in the third collection of activities, acknowledgement will be made and a reprint of the collection will be sent to you.